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STATEMENT OF SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ROBERT S. McNAMARA
BEFORE A JOINT SESSION OF
THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE AND
THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS
ON THE FISCAL YEAR 1965-69 DEFENSE PROGRAM AND 1965 DEFENSE BUDGET

FEB 3 1964

RESTRICTED DATA
Atomic Energy Act, 1954
As Amended

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We hope that, with our full support, the new government can take hold and eventually suppress the Viet Cong insurrection. The dry season will give us a firmer basis for this judgment. However, the survival of an independent government in South Vietnam is so important to the security of all of Southeast Asia and to the free world that I can conceive of no alternative other than to take all necessary measures within our capability to prevent a Communist victory. We must prove that Communist aggression cannot succeed through subversion, but will fail as surely as it has failed in direct confrontation.

The situation in Laos has a direct bearing on our problems in Vietnam and is also crucial to the security interests of the free world in the rest of Asia. In terms of Western interests, the position of Laos, as it has developed over the past year, can only be characterized as extremely precarious. Although the Communist-supported Pathet Lao have not yet launched a major military attack against the non-Communist factions, they are taking every opportunity to sabotage the coalition government headed by neutralist Prince Souvanna Phouma. The Communists continue to control the key border areas adjacent to Vietnam plus the provinces in the north bordering on China and continue to jockey for tactically advantageous positions in the important Plaine des Jarres.

On the favorable side, although we did withdraw our military advisors under the terms of the Geneva Agreement of 1962, we have succeeded in re-equipping some of the non-Communist forces with conventional arms allowing them to discard obsolete and unsupportable Communist-Bloc equipment. Moreover, these forces are now better trained and in a better state of morale than they were a year ago. I believe it is of utmost importance that we continue our limited assistance to this country and be prepared to take all possible measures to thwart a complete Communist takeover of this keystone nation in Southeast Asia.



The new Thai government which took over at the recent death of Prime Minister Sarit has yet to prove itself. We are engaged in a major effort to assist Thailand in improving its capability to meet the threat of Communist infiltration and subversion and in strengthening its internal

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II. STRATEGIC RETALIATORY FORCES

The Strategic Retaliatory Forces are designed to carry out the long-range strategic mission and to carry the main burden of battle in general nuclear war. These forces include the long-range bombers, the air-to-ground and decoy missiles, and the refueling tankers; the land-based and submarine-based strategic missiles; and the systems for their command and control. They do not include certain other U.S. nuclear forces capable of reaching targets well inside the Communist Bloc - namely, the deployed tactical air units and carrier-based attack aircraft. Although the targeting of these forces is coordinated with those of the Strategic Retaliatory Forces, they are not taken into account in computing the requirements for the latter because they are intended primarily for other purposes.

A. THE REQUIREMENT

The size and character of the Strategic Retaliatory Forces are influenced importantly by the basic strategy they are designed to support. This strategy has been the subject of a great deal of public discussion during the last year - as it most properly should be, considering its grave importance. But the wide differences in perspective that this discussion has revealed would seem to indicate that we have failed to convey, at least to certain important sections of the American public, the basic fundamentals of the strategic problem confronting our Nation in this nuclear age.

At one extreme there are the proponents of the "overkill" theory who argue that the United States already has enough nuclear weapons to destroy all of the major cities of the Soviet Union several times over, even after absorbing the first blow and that, therefore, no further investments in the Strategic Retaliatory Forces are required or can be justified. At the other extreme there are the proponents of what one might call the "full first strike" theory who believe that we should build a strategic force that would enable us, if we struck first, to so reduce Soviet retaliatory power that the damage it could then do to U.S. population and industry would be brought down to an "acceptable" level, what ever that might be.

The proponents of the "overkill" theory would, in effect, restrict our strategic forces to those required for retaliation against cities only - with the calculation assuming near optimum conditions. This is not a new concept. I understand that it has been debated within the Defense Department for many years before I came to the Pentagon, but I know of no responsible official within the Department who would support it today. To serve as a maximum deterrent to nuclear war, our Strategic Retaliatory Forces must be visibly capable of fully destroying the Soviet society under

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all conditions of retaliation. In addition, in the event that such a war is forced upon us, they should have the power to limit the destruction of our own cities and population to the maximum extent practicable.

It is quite likely that the Soviet Union, in an attack upon the U.S. and Western Europe would not fire all of its strategic nuclear weapons in a "salvo launch". Regardless of whether the Soviets struck first at our cities or first at our military installations or at both simultaneously, it is probable that the launching of their bombers and missiles would extend over a sufficient period of time for us to receive the first blow, to strike back not only at Soviet cities, if that be our choice, but also at the elements of their forces that had not yet been launched. To achieve this capability, we must have a force considerably larger than that which might be needed simply to destroy Soviet cities.

Believers in the "overkill" theory, however, argue that the U.S. would have already been gravely damaged by the initial attack, that it would be very difficult to destroy the enemy's residual force, and that in any event we could not know which of their missiles had not been fired and which were the "empty holes". Therefore, they conclude that we should not even try to destroy the enemy's residual forces.

Certainly, the U.S. would be greatly damaged by the initial wave of a nuclear attack. And certainly, as time goes on and the Soviet Union continues to harden its missile sites and continues to build missile-firing submarines, it will become increasingly difficult to destroy a substantial portion of the residual forces. I have made no attempt in any of my statements to the Congress to "sugar-coat" these hard facts of life in the nuclear age. Indeed, I was chided in some quarters for applying the term "grim prospect" to this reality. But it is one thing to recognize the facts of life; it is quite another to throw up one's hands and not even make the attempt to save what we can of our Nation and our society.

Over the last two and one-half years we have made many comprehensive studies of alternative U.S. strategic retaliatory force structures employed in a nuclear exchange with a wide range of possible Soviet forces and under a wide variety of assumptions pertaining to the outbreak of war and U.S. and Soviet operational factors. In every pertinent case we found that forces in excess of those needed simply to destroy Soviet cities would significantly reduce damage to the U.S. and Western Europe. And the extent to which damage to ourselves can be reduced depends importantly on the size and character of our own forces, particularly the surface-to-surface missiles such as MINUTEMAN that can reach their targets quickly. I will discuss this latter aspect in greater detail later in the statement in connection with the analysis of the overall adequacy of the Strategic Retaliatory Forces we recommend for the fiscal year 1965-69 period.

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But even an assured and persuasive "cities only" capability would require forces much larger than those implied by the "overkill" theory. It is not simply a matter of calculating the number of "Hiroshima equivalents", i.e., 20 kilotons equals 100,000 fatalities and, therefore, 10 megatons equals 50 million fatalities. Carried to that extreme we would need just one B-47 loaded with one 10 megaton weapon. Obviously, many other factors must be taken into account: numbers of targets and their defenses, numbers of weapons required to saturate defenses or to assure penetration, damage to our forces from enemy attack, the readiness and reliability of our own weapons, etc.

Each of these factors involves varying degrees of uncertainty, particularly when we are projecting our forces into the future. And, to cover these uncertainties, extra insurance must be provided in the program. We must be completely sure, and the Communists must be completely sure, of our ability at all times to retaliate decisively against Soviet cities, even under the worst of circumstances.

While a "cities only" strategic retaliatory force would, in our judgment, be dangerously inadequate, a "full first strike" force, as I defined it earlier, is, on the basis of our estimates of the Soviet nuclear strike forces in the fiscal year 1967-69 period, simply unattainable. Moreover, I know of no responsible Pentagon official, certainly none of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who proposes such a force.

As I pointed out last year, the Soviets are hardening some of their ICBM sites and are building missile-launching submarines. Although we could have an effective capability to sink enemy submarines in a protracted war of attrition at sea, we do not appear to have any realistic prospect of being able to destroy the major part of a Soviet submarine missile force in one quick first strike. Neither could we count, with any reasonable degree of assurance, on destroying all or almost all of the Soviet's hardened missile sites, even if we were to double or triple our forces. Furthermore, it is highly doubtful that we would be able to achieve the necessary tactical surprise in the kinds of crises in which a "first strike" capability would be relevant.

Finally, a "full first strike" capability would have to be accompanied by vast programs of anti-missile, anti-bomber, and civil defense. Even then our calculations show that U.S. fatalities would still run into tens of millions while in Western Europe fatalities would be very much higher. Thus, the paramount conclusion supported by all of our studies is that for any level of force we might practicably build, and even under the most favorable circumstances to us, a nuclear exchange between the U.S. and the Soviet Union would do enormous damage to both sides.

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Thus, a "damage-limiting" strategy appears to be the most practical and effective course for us to follow. Such a strategy requires a force considerably larger than would be needed for a limited "cities only" strategy. While there are still some differences of judgment on just how large such a force should be, there is general agreement that it should be large enough to ensure the destruction, singly or in combination, of the Soviet Union, Communist China, and the Communist satellites as national societies, under the worst possible circumstances of war outbreak that can reasonably be postulated, and, in addition, to destroy their war-making capability so as to limit, to the extent practicable, damage to this country and to our Allies.

The forces recommended to provide this capability through fiscal year 1969 are shown on Table 2.

B. PRESENT U.S. STRATEGIC RETALIATORY CAPABILITIES

By June of this year the number of ICBM and POLARIS missiles will, for the first time, just about equal the number of manned bombers in the force. During the three-year period from end fiscal year 1961 through end fiscal year 1964, the number of weapons in the alert forces will have been increased about two and one-half times and the megatonnage of these weapons almost three times, even though 450 B-47's will have been phased out of the force during the same period.

The Soviet Union by mid-1964 is expected to have a total of between [REDACTED] on launchers, [REDACTED] submarine-launched ballistic missiles, 180-205 heavy bomber and tanker aircraft, and 940-975 medium bomber and tanker aircraft, plus about [REDACTED] IRBM/MRBM missiles on launchers. The Soviet Union is just beginning to harden its ICBM's, IRBM's, and MRBM's. Most of our land-based missiles are installed in hardened sites and our POLARIS missiles, of course, have a much greater range than the Soviet submarine-launched missiles, most of which are in diesel-powered boats, and all of which presently have to be fired while the submarine is surfaced.

On the basis of these data, I can again tell this Committee--"There is no question but that today our strategic retaliatory forces are fully capable of destroying the Soviet target system, even after absorbing an initial surprise attack."

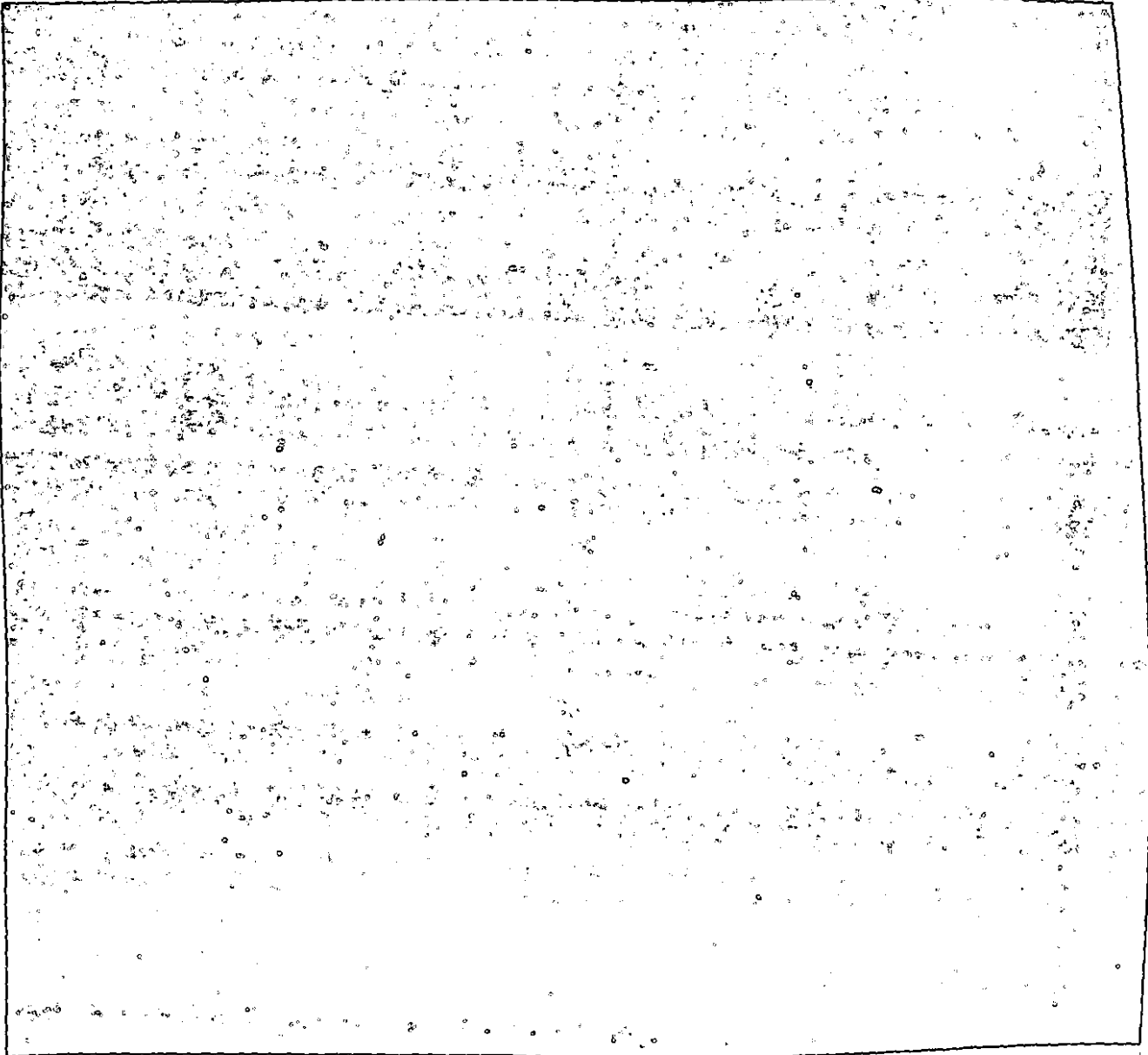
C. FUTURE STRATEGIC RETALIATORY FORCES

One of the major determinants of the size and character of our future Strategic Retaliatory Forces is, of course, the size and character of the strategic forces and defensive systems our opponents are likely to have over the next several years. As I pointed out last year, because of

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the long leadtimes involved in bringing strategic weapon systems to operational status, we must plan our forces well in advance of the time when they will be needed and, indeed, we now project our programs at least five years ahead. For the same reason, we must also project our estimates of the enemy's forces over at least the same time period. These longer-range projections of enemy capabilities must necessarily be highly uncertain, particularly since they deal with a period beyond the production and deployment leadtimes of enemy weapon systems. We are estimating capabilities and attempting to anticipate production and deployment decisions which our opponents, themselves, may not as yet have made.



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An interesting and important result of these studies was the clear demonstration of the great contribution that an adequate fallout shelter program could make to our damage-limiting capability. The analyses indicated:

- (1) That a properly planned nation-wide fallout shelter program would contribute far more to the saving of lives per dollar than an increase in MINUTEMAN missiles beyond the level we recommend.
- (2) That even if the Soviets were to attack only our military installations, without an adequate fallout shelter program, fatalities from fallout would be very high - about three times higher than they would be with an adequate civil defense program.

Obviously, these judgments are based on our present estimates of the probable make-up of Soviet forces during the program period. As I noted earlier, for the more distant years these estimates must be considered quite tentative since, in part, they rest on assumptions regarding decisions which the Soviet leadership may not as yet have had to make. Our presently planned program retains for us sufficient flexibility to make changes in time to meet any Soviet program shift. We have ample manufacturing capacity for POLARIS and MINUTEMAN, both of which will be in production for some years to come. If more are needed in future years, we should be able to procure them in time.

G. FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The Strategic Retaliatory Forces I have outlined will require Total Obligational Authority of \$5.3 billion for fiscal year 1965. A comparison with prior fiscal years is shown below:

(\$ Billions, Fiscal Years)

	<u>1962</u> <u>Original</u>	<u>1962</u> <u>Final</u>	<u>1963</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>1964</u> <u>Estimated</u>	<u>1965</u> <u>Proposed</u>
Total Obligational Authority	7.6	9.1	8.4	7.3	5.3